

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07 INT-05

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-06 OES-07

SP-02 SS-15 STR-05 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 /116 W

-----032094 200355Z /12

R 192330Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6481

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

HICOMTERPACIS SAIPAN

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

HICOMPTERPACIS SAIPAN FOR STATUS LNO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, TN

SUBJECT: TONGAN OIL DEVELOPMENTS

1. HOPES HAVE REVIVED AMONG GOT OFFICIALS THAT OIL IN COMMERCIAL AMOUNTS WILL BE DISCOVERED IN THE KINGDOM WHEN NEW TEST HOLES ARE DRILLED NEXT JANUARY. WEBB TONGA, SUBSIDIARY OF U.S. INDEPENDENT WEBB RESOURCES OF COLORADO, WILL RETURN NEXT AUTUMN TO PREPARE FOR THE NEW EXPLORATIONS.

2. WILL BE RECALLED WEBB EXPLORED OFF-SHORE UNSUCCESSFULLY LAST YEAR, THEN SUSPENDED SDISMOLOGICAL SURVEY. SURVEYORS HAVE NOW FOUND WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS "VERY STRONG EVIDENCE" OF COMMERCIAL OIL IN SEVEN OR NINE (AMMOUNTS DIFFER) SUBTERRANEAN DOMES. WEBB REPORTEDLY

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WILL INVEST \$3 MILLION IN FIRST THREE TEST BORINGS AND IS SO ENTHUSIASTIC

WITH PROSPECTS THAT IT HAS APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED EXTENSION OF ORIGINAL TONGATAPU CONCESSION TO INCLUDE NORTHERN ISLAND GROUPS OF HA'APAI AND VAVA'U. JAPANESE COMBINE DICKERING FOR REMAINING CONCESSION SURROUNDING SMALL OUTLIERS NORTH OF VAVA'U.

3. TONGAN CAPITAL OF NUKU'ALOFA AWASH WITH RUMORS REGARDING EXTENT AND LOCATION OF POSSIBLE OIL DEPOSITS. KING TUPOU TOLD VISITING CINCPAC, ADMIRAL WEISNER, AND ME THAT OIL INDICATED OFF TONGATAPU AND UNDER NUKU'ALOFA ITSELF. CABINET MINISTER LATER TOLD ME IN SUVA THAT A DOME LOCATED BELOW PRISON FARM BETWEEN NUKU'ALOFA AND FUA'AMOTU AIRPORT IS BELIEVED CONTAIN POSSIBLY AS MUCH AS MALAYSIAN RESOURCES.

4. WHEN CINCPAC AND I DISCUSSED IMPLICATIONS OF MAJOR OIL STRIKE WITH KING DURING ADMIRAL'S RECENT CALL AT TONGA, TUPOU VIEWED INEVITABLE TRANSFORMATION HIS SLEEPY KINGDOM IN HIGHLY POSITIVE LIGHT, JOVIALY INSISTING THAT CULTURAL IMPACT COULD BE LIMITED TO AREAS OF TONGATAPU. CONSEQUENCES OF MAJOR FIND IN TERMS ECOLOGY, SLOW RHYTHM OF PRIZED TONGAN TRADITIONAL LIFE, AND POSSIBLE EFFECT ON MONARCHICAL STRUCTURE ITSELF ONLY NOW BEGINNING DAWN ON GOT OFFICIALS. INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT MAJOR STOP ON KING'S FORTHCOMING TOUR OF TTPI WILL BE PALAU WHERE OIL SUPERPORT PLANS HAVE DIVIDED ISLANDERS.
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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